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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRAGUE 000132

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TAGS: [PINR](#) [EAID](#) [EUN](#) [KDEM](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [EZ](#)  
SUBJECT: CZECH CONTRIBUTIONS TO IRAQ (C-RE8-00009)

REF: A. STATE 4865  
    [1](#)B. STATE 2310  
    [1](#)C. PRAGUE 84  
    [1](#)D. 07 PRAGUE 1282  
    [1](#)E. 07 PRAGUE 467  
    [1](#)F. 06 PRAGUE 97  
    [1](#)G. 06 PRAGUE 1543

Classified By: POLEC Counselor Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Czech Republic has maintained troops in Iraq since 2003, and its support will continue at a reduced level through 2008. While no final decision has been made on 2009, the Foreign Ministry would like to see a small number of Czech troops remain in Iraq so long as the NATO Training Mission continues. The Czechs have made other contributions in the military, security, democracy promotion, development assistance, and humanitarian fields (reftels) over the last several years and while many of its projects have been brought to successful conclusion, the Czechs still have several multi-year projects which will continue, as well as funds to respond to project proposals from its Embassy in Baghdad. End Summary.

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Military/Security Contributions  
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[1](#)2. (U) The Czech Republic was an original coalition member of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and was at one time the fourth largest contributor of troops to Iraq. Starting in September 2002, the Czechs were the primary contributor to a 400 member nuclear-biological-chemical (NBC) defense contingent. That mission was followed in 2003 by the six-month deployment of a 526-person Czech field hospital that treated more than 10,000 coalition forces and Iraqi citizens in the Basra area. They sent six military police trainers to the NATO facility at Ar Rustamiyah in Baghdad in 2005 and contributed \$200,000 to the Trust Fund to support this mission. In addition, the Czechs have participated in the Multinational Security Transition Command (MNSTC-I) and NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) to help create security structures in Iraq.

[1](#)3. (SBU) From December 2003 to December 2006, the Czech Army deployed approximately 100 military police in Basra to train Iraqi security forces. In December 2006, in coordination with the British, the Czech military police concluded this mission and relocated to a base near Basra airport, where their duties largely involved force protection.

[1](#)4. (C) Now that the handover of responsibility from the British to the Iraqis in Basra has occurred, the Czechs plan to reduce their total forces in Iraq by June 2008 - from 100 down to 20 personnel. Currently the Czech MFA and MoD are evaluating where to place these 20 personnel for the remainder of 2008. According to Czech defense officials, they are considering placing 16 personnel under MNSTC-I, possibly in Taji, which is approximately 20-30 km north of

Baghdad, with four officers placed as instructors under NTM-I. (Note: The current Czech Commander in Basra is planning to discuss this matter the week of March 10 with the Commander of the Iraqi Armor School in Taji. End Note.)

15. (C) In response to ref A questions regarding 2009: the Czechs have not yet determined their plans for next year. According to MFA Political Director Martin Povejsil, the MFA's preference would be to maintain its entire small military presence in Iraq under NTM-I for as long as this mission continues to function; at present, the MFA does not expect there will be any Czech troops committed to Coalition operations in 2009. With the focus solely on NATO-led missions, the Czechs have not closely studied the question of what sort of international mandate would be necessary to meet legal and parliamentary concerns. Planning for the CY2009 deployments will begin in the spring; the MOD-drafted legislation usually goes to government for approval in September, and is approved by parliament in December.

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Democracy Promotion  
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16. (U) The Czechs have engaged in a range of activities to share their successful transition experience with members of Iraqi civil society. Early on they sent experts to CPA Baghdad to consult on transition issues, such as banking, trade and investment, engineering, water and energy policy, and infrastructure planning. Between 2004-2006, in cooperation with Prague-based Central European and Eurasian Law Institute (CEELI), the Czechs provided legal training for 200 Iraqi judges. When Iraqi elections occurred in 2005, the GOCR helped Iraqi citizens living in the Czech Republic vote

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by transporting them to Berlin. In 2006 the Czech government branched into the security field and provided training in Prague on immigration, border control, and airport security to 45 Iraqi interior ministry officials, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The Czechs provided similar, specialized training here in the Czech Republic in November 2007 at the recommendation of the Czech Embassy in Baghdad, for eight airport officials from the northern city of Irbil.

17. (SBU) At the heart of Czech engagement in the area of democracy promotion has been the NGO "People in Need" (PIN). In 2005-2006, with financial support from the Czech MFA, PIN provided training for Iraqi NGOs, journalists, and government officials at the Democracy and Transition Center in Jordan. In 2007, the MFA once again provided funding for a PIN multi-year project (scheduled to run through 2009) specifically focusing on training for Iraqi NGOs and monitoring microgrants. According to the MFA office of human rights and transition policy, they did not receive any new proposals from Czech NGOs for 2008 projects in Iraq. This department, however, does anticipate that its Embassy in Baghdad will make proposals on an as needed basis and the MFA has funds available for human rights and democratic transition projects in Iraq.

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Reconstruction & Development  
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18. (SBU) The Czechs also help reconstruction efforts in Iraq by donating funds, providing debt relief, and encouraging private foreign investment. Specifically, the Czechs have: 1. Spent over \$9 million on Iraqi reconstruction. 2. Forgiven 80 percent of Iraqi sovereign external debt owed to the Czech Republic, which previously totaled 285,514,110 USD. The Czechs have also spent \$20.8 million between 2003-2005 to encourage private Czech companies to do business in Iraq (e.g., by providing feasibility studies).

¶9. (SBU) The GOCR, in addition to offering a number of training programs, such as in the fall of 2007 in Northern Iraq on water sanitation to help address a grave cholera outbreak, has also funded a select number of bachelors, masters and PhD programs. For instance, the Czechs provided financial support for ten Iraqi students pursuing a PhD program in economics in Prague at the Center for Economic Research and Graduate Education (CERGE-EI). There are also two other education posts that the Czechs began in 2006 for Iraqi students to study at Charles University. One student is currently in his second year of masters studies in IT while the other is enrolled in the conservation of art bachelors program.

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Humanitarian Assistance  
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¶10. (U) The Czechs are committed to long-term humanitarian aid in Iraq, having spent over \$5 million on such efforts since 2003. The Czechs have operated a medevac program since 2003 that has brought 38 Iraqi children to Prague and provided life-saving cardiac surgery and convalescent care for them (and material support for their accompanying family members). In 2005, to supplement the efficacy of the medevac program, the Czechs founded a pediatric cardiac center at a hospital in Basra, and donated equipment and provided training to Iraqi doctors working there. The Czechs also provide funding to the UNHCR for Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria. In 2007, the Czechs contributed just over 170,000 USD to this program.

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Cultural Preservation  
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¶11. (U) The Czechs have spent more than \$2 million on preserving Iraqi cultural heritage. In one notable example, the Czechs spent \$330,000 on the restoration of manuscripts in the National Library of Baghdad. They also contributed \$100,000 to restore the Kurdish Citadel in Irbil and they have donated arms and ammunition to Iraqi security forces to guard national heritage sites. The Czechs continue to support the Iraqis with the preservation of this citidel and their efforts to have this site designated as a UNESCO world heritage site.

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Prospects in 2008  
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¶12. (SBU) In response to Reftels A and B, we can expect that the Czechs will reduce their current forces from 100 down to 20 personnel by mid year. These forces are likely to take on

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a slightly different role - changing from force protection to training. We can expect that the work of the Czech NGO People in Need training Iraqi NGOs will continue through 2009 and that the Czechs will respond on an "as needed" basis to requests from its Embassy to fund special projects. We can also expect Czech UN contributions and educational programs will continue. The Czechs have not suffered casualties in Iraq, and if this situation holds, we do not expect that domestic politics will play a major role in any GOCR decisions regarding troop deployments, which are generally non-controversial and supported by the Czech public.

¶13. (SBU) Comment: The Czechs have been a reliable ally in the Global War on Terror, and their efforts over many years in Iraq, as well as their substantially expanded engagement in Afghanistan (Reftel C), are two clear examples of this. While their efforts in Iraq have varied over time, given Iraqi needs, they continue to work with the international community to identify areas where the Czechs can make a positive difference.  
Dodman